

The Mighty 591

Chapter 591 Making a Pact with Pike

The fish from the well didn't cause much of a stir. If it were on Earth, the novelty of fish emerging from an underground spring would definitely be a hot topic for hype.

But in this world full of wonders,

it's no big deal to have fish springs underground, let alone fish raining from the sky.

For Liszt, it was the same, he was merely curious about how the fish spring formed and enjoyed the taste of the fish from the well, but didn't take it too seriously. The specialties of his territory, apart from magical beasts and magic potions, were limited to unique products like rubber trees and hemp rope vines that piqued his interest.

The knight he sent to dive into the fish spring quickly delivered a survey report—the fish spring was indeed connected to an underground channel, but the passageway was very narrow. Diving in, one could swim less than ten meters back and forth before encountering a narrow spot that was impassable. However, there were a large number of well fish in the waterway.

This confirmed that the fish spring was truly hitting an underground river, causing the emergence of schools of fish.

After reading the survey report, Liszt was not quite satisfied, "If the underground river is just a narrow channel, it couldn't possibly support so many well fish. There must be a huge underground cavern or lake at some location. Perhaps the underground river is connected to former magma channels!"

He remembered over at Red River Town, there was a Bone Lake, which used to be a Burial Ground.

Underneath those dragon bones, there was a vast magma cavern with magma channels blocked off in all directions. Perhaps the underground river developed in these cut-off magma channels.

"Forget it, speculating aimlessly is pointless. I'll have the opportunity to slowly explore the underground river system on Black Horse Island in the future."

Although the fish spring didn't lead to more interesting findings, Liszt still made it a point to incorporate it as an attraction affiliated with Thorn Castle.

He had a downward tunnel excavated.

A pavilion was constructed on the surface, named Fish Spring Corridor—a great place for relaxation.

Liszt even planned to set up a barbecue stall at the Fish Spring Corridor, so that in the future, Thorn Castle could hold barbecue buffets here, offering freshly caught and grilled fish, full of fun.

Having arranged all this,

Liszt no longer focused on the construction of Thorn Castle. He went to Dodo Island Volcano and cultivated overnight with Little Fire Dragon Leo. Laden with many insights, he returned to Fresh Flower Town to organize the content and incorporate it into his other magnum opus, "Liszt's Dragon Taming Manual".

He then revised it again and again, finalizing "The Conjectures on the Nexus of the Magic Net, Elves, and Dragons".

He handed it to Ake for reference.

Ake, who was studying Druid Magic, was rarely so engrossed in a theoretical magic book, reading it with relish. Liszt, meanwhile, chatted with Pike, who had already mastered Serpent Script and was able to communicate normally. Pike had even learned quite a bit of Wind Language—it was all taught by Ake.

In the territory, Ake undoubtedly had the strongest learning ability, picking up anything quickly.

"Liszt, did you bring me jade powder? I need a change of flavor. Eating white jade powder all the time is unsatisfying. Bring me some special jade powder. The taste of the purple jade powder I had last time was pretty good," demanded Pike nonchalantly while lounging in the pool, its current concern being jade powder.

"There's no more purple jade, but I've brought green jade powder," Liszt handed a packet of finely ground green jade powder to Pike.

Jade powder is neither gemstone nor crystal; it's a naturally formed stone in the earth's veins that contains magic power. This magic power is hard to harness for making magic equipment, but it's quite suited to an elf's palate. Regular consumption of jade powder can ensure an elf's vitality. During the transplantation of cordyceps, they depend on jade powder to survive.

However, there's no evidence that jade powder aids in an elf's evolution. It merely sustains the vitality of an elf.

Of course, it also satisfies an elf's culinary desires.

There are many types of jade—green jade, purple jade, white jade, yellow jade, Jade, chalcedony, agate, black jade, red jade, and so on. As long as it's naturally formed and possesses magic power, it's considered jade. Jade is sufficiently distributed on the earth's surface, so its price is much cheaper than that of crystals.

As elves increased in number, Liszt had to use many gemstones every day. He tried hard to find them on Black Horse Island, but unfortunately, he couldn't find any jade veins,

and had no choice but to continue purchasing from outside.

In fact, Black Horse Island was extremely poor in resources. Apart from the volcanic glass mined previously, there was not a second type of mineral resource. The graphite, saltpeter, sulfur, jade, and phosphorus mines he wanted were all missing. Even the raw materials for making glass, quartz mines, were non-existent.

If it weren't for Liszt having the Smoke Mission to transform the island,

it would probably be suitable only for raising horses, specifically for breeding that herd of Black Blood Treasured Horses.

"Green jade powder tastes terrible. Don't bring it anymore next time. I don't like it," Pike licked the jade powder and said unhappily, "Liszt, I feel you don't care about me enough. You know I love eating hard-textured jade powder, but you keep giving me soft-textured powder!"

"Be grateful you have something to eat. Where do all these complaints come from?"

"Don't you feel guilty treating the handsome Pike like this?" Pike covered his small chest and pretended to be dramatic.

"No, I don't," Liszt said with a smile.

Pike yelled, "Ah!"

He tumbled in the pool, venting his dissatisfaction.

"Stop yelling. Look at the neighbors, Fizz, Tam, and Eddie. They're eating happily."

"Please don't compare the handsome Pike with those ugly and idiotic Three Stooges. It's an insult to me and to you because we are both handsome," Pike said disdainfully. In its eyes, apart from Liszt and itself, no one could be considered handsome.

The three Giant Algae Minor Elves were often mockingly called The Three Stooges to their faces by it.

The Giant Algae Minor Elves dared not speak out in anger—because they couldn't win in a fight. Unlike minor elves who couldn't disobey Liszt's orders, Pike had relatively more freedom under the contract. It often disobeyed Liszt's commands behind his back, teaching a lesson to those three Giant Algae Minor Elves who dared to bare their teeth at it.

Fortunately, it was aware of the importance of elves in Liszt's eyes and did not dare to seriously harm the other elves; at most, he caused some superficial bruising.

"Pike, let's make a deal, okay? From now on, let's not say we're equally handsome. I think you're the most handsome," said Liszt.

Pike immediately burst into laughter: "Hahaha, it's okay, we are both handsome." It truly believed Liszt was complimenting it.

The corner of Liszt's mouth twitched, and he stopped talking.

No matter how clever a Greater Elf is, it's still just a Greater Elf; unlike real humans, they lack comprehensive understanding. He walked into his study and looked at Sea Sprite Ake, who was reading seriously—her petite exquisite figure, fair skin blushing with health, beautiful and innocent face, and the private parts wrapped with water.

Such a scene always sparked endless daydreams in him.

Sometimes Ake would wear clothes, but most of the time, she disliked the constraint of clothing, and Liszt, with ulterior motives, didn't force her to wear them daily.

His gaze wandered along Ake's well-proportioned body and eventually settled on her ankles, which merged with the seawater of Shell Sea, the lack of feet being Ake's biggest flaw at the moment.

"Alas, why do I always seem to encounter minors?" he straightened his sleeves, feeling somewhat sentimental.

Ake was underage, Leo had just been born, the Formless Dragon was probably underage too, Emily was underage, and the twin sisters Rose and Lucy were not of age either...

Shaking his head, he threw out the somewhat disorderly thoughts. He was a man of integrity, after all!

Chapter 592 There Will Be Times When One Rides the Wind and Breaks the Waves

The honest Liszt was at that moment patiently listening to the Sea Sprite Ake's feedback on his book, "The Conjectures on the Nexus of the Magic Net, Elves, and Dragons". He had shared many speculations about the magic web with Ake, so immediately after finishing the book, Ake was able to provide feedback.

"Brother, Ake thinks the magic web is not actually a 'web'; it ought to be considered a 'field', although it indeed forms nodes as Brother has described, similar to a spider's web," said Ake.

"A field?"

Liszt was slightly puzzled. He indeed had discussed the concept of an electromagnetic field with Ake because compasses also exist in this world. When explaining why compass needles point north, he had used the concept of Earth's magnetic field. He then incidentally explained electromagnetic fields, including concepts like electricity generation through magnetism and electromagnetic induction.

He hadn't expected Ake not only to remember the concept of a field but also to apply it to the magic web.

She continued, "Brother has said that if an object moves within a magnetic field, it can cut across magnetic lines of force, thereby generating an electric current."

"Yes, I did say that," Liszt responded somewhat vaguely.

In truth, having graduated many years ago and not having touched a physics book since, his grasp of many physical concepts had blurred, and he was unsure whether his explanations had been correct. If he had not intended to spur Ake's recognition of truth, he would have been genuinely embarrassed to present such half-baked knowledge.

Getting a concept wrong would make him look foolish.

"So, Ake believes the magic web is a field that envelops our world, and casting spells is the equivalent of using magic arrays to 'cut magnetic lines of force', with magic being the 'electric current' phenomenon produced by 'electromagnetic induction'."

Such an explanation.

Seemed very pseudoscientific.

Liszt couldn't help but inquire, "Ake, what grounds do you have for these deductions?"

Ake shook her head: "There's not enough evidence to prove this point for now, but Ake has been reading a great deal of magic books recently, has heard Brother discuss many profound pieces of knowledge, and has been studying a lot of natural magic. There are many insights fermenting in my mind."

Then.

She expressed her frustration, "The concept of the magic web as a field is my vague conjecture; it's just that I can't prove whether the magic web is a web or a field... Brother, now I have mastered a lot of knowledge but don't know how to deal with it, as many theories conflict with each other."

An idea flashed in Liszt's mind: "Ake, why don't you learn to write a book with me!"

"Huh?"

"Write a book. All magicians do this; even those magic apprentices who can only cast the Fireball Technique understand the importance of publishing a book. You're already a Grand Magician; apart from a few casting plans, you haven't authored any magic books yet. Now, you should properly sort out your thoughts and turn them into a book."

As a historian, magical theoretician, Dou Qi theoretician, sociologist, musician, and playwright, Liszt possessed extensive experience in authoring books.

As a sociologist, he had meticulously studied this world's social system, identifying five classes — the upper-class Noble Landlords; upper-middle class Magicians, Knights, Officials, and Artists; middle class Technicians, Mercenaries; lower-middle class Castle Servants, Craftsmen, Merchants, Workers; and the bottom class Serfs.

As a historian, even though his "Dragons Fight in the Wild" had stagnated, after reading numerous knight's novels and magic books, he had already organized a comprehensive civilizational context. He had also made several historical inventions to fill the significant historical gaps of this world. Once published, they were certain to provide ample material for future historians.

As a musician, his "Liszt's Piano Collection," which included only a few pieces like "To Alice," "Accompanying You," and "The Swan of Saint-Saens," might not showcase proficient piano skills. But every time he played the piano, hordes of noble ladies eagerly threw themselves at him.

As long as he continued to delve into it, becoming the Piano King was just a matter of time.

As a playwright, he had yet to publish any plays, but under his guidance, a new type of drama that took the form of stage plays began to gain popularity beyond Coral Island.

As a magic theorist, his "Theory of Tri-State Magic Arrays and Reality Interaction," "Unification Theory of Triangle Theory and Magic Array Structure," and the latest "The Conjectures on the Nexus of the Magic Net, Elves, and Dragons" would undoubtedly make their mark in the history of magic development.

As a Dou Qi theorist, it was even more impressive. His book, "The Earth Chronicle of Liszt," had become a treasured heirloom of the Tulip Family. While Liszt's study of medicine had not been made public, his innovative approach, summarizing the essence of medicine with a scientific method, was astonishing.

And now he was in the process of creating an even more amazing "Liszt's Dragon Taming Manual."

Once completed, it would surely shake heaven and earth.

At this moment, Liszt, adorned with many titles, solemnly analyzed, "Writing books is not a waste of time. It is through authorship that I better summarize my research findings, sort out my thoughts, and make scattered ideas organized, thereby gaining more inspiration."

After his explanation, Acherlroides Truth couldn't help but nod seriously, "Mm, brother is right. Ake has learned so much knowledge without organizing it. It's time to compile it into books!"

"Good, I look forward to your publication. The White Paper Workshop in my domain is currently developing new paper. I'll use it to publish your book when the time comes. Let more people know the name Acherlroides Truth."

"Hehe, thank you, brother."

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Ake had not yet thoroughly studied Natural Magic and was already set on writing books. Her days were busy, with no time left for swimming in the sea.

Luckily, she had another task, which was to visit Dodo Island every few days to catch a large amount of fish for the Little Fire Dragon. This journey was her best relaxation, embracing the sea and cleansing her soul. After returning, she had to continue her magic research, write books, and organize knowledge.

Liszt was also busy, although he often busied himself with random tasks.

Having just left Ake, he went to the Mage Tower and handed his latest work to Chris Truth for reference, topped with the issue of whether the Magic Web is more appropriately termed a 'web' or a 'field'—he had grown too lazy to research whether it was a web or a field and left the matter to Ake and Chris to figure out.

As a magic theorist, he only needed to propose a theory. The rest was up to the magic experimentalists to prove.

Chris had little understanding of the Magic Web, and this theoretical work shocked her profoundly, causing her to bury herself in it, unable to respond for a long time.

Liszt had no time to waste here.

He received notice from Captain Kostor that "Sunset", the Sky Ship, which had been repaired and remodeled in the dockyard, was finally finished and ready for a trial voyage out at sea.

As a three-masted sailing vessel, Sunset would become the flagship of the Black Horse Island fleet for the foreseeable future.

Therefore, as a landowner, Liszt naturally would participate in this distant sea trial voyage—the route had been determined, setting sail directly from New Harbor to the port of Coral City for resupply, then circling around Coral Island before returning to Black Horse Port.

Chapter 593 Gold Coins Are Just Numbers

The Sunset was moored in the dockyard, ready to set sail.

Liszt, riding on the Landwalker bird Loki, gazed at the Sky Ship that was 65 meters in length and 19 meters wide, with three massive and sturdy masts erected.

As the civilization of the Child of the Sun crumbled, this immense ship, which once soared through the skies in an unimaginable manner, became history. When Liszt salvaged it and decided to convert it into a seafaring vessel, it bid farewell to its past and moved towards a new future.

"Lord Landlord, judging from what I've seen, the condition of the Sunset is now on par with the Court's fast sailing ships,"

The speaker was Bak Fumu, an apprentice shipbuilder.

He came from a shipyard on Leather Island, which is a property of the Marquis of Leather Island, Ramirez White Glutinous Rice; he was forced to leave the shipyard for some reason. Subsequently, he was invited by the Tulip Family to settle in Black Horse Island through the merchant caravan's network and took charge of the dockyard.

Only three families in the Duchy of Sapphire could build double-masted sailing ships: the White Glutinous Rice Family, Pineapple Green Family, and the Sapphire Family. The Bull Marquis Family used to grasp the technique for building double-masted sailing ships but has long dissipated into nothingness.

The Sapphire Family also possessed the technique for building three-masted ships, which was basically the world's top shipbuilding technique, kept strictly confidential and not leaked.

Ordinary nobles couldn't dream of poaching shipbuilders from the Sapphire Family; even if they did manage to abduct one, they would quickly incur the Grand Duke's wrath.

Therefore, Liszt had to ask his father, Li Weiliam, to poach from the White Glutinous Rice and Pineapple Green Families. Unable to poach a shipbuilder, he managed to recruit an apprentice shipbuilder. This apprentice named Bak Fumu had decent skills and was responsible for overseeing the development of double-masted sailing ship technology.

Liszt believed it would not take long before he mastered the double-masted sailing ship technology.

In addition to the Dragonbone Stabilizer Technique he acquired from Virginia Truth, and his own knowledge of square-rig technology, he would definitely be able to build high-quality sailing ships.

Leveraging his extensive shipbuilding experience,

Bak Fumu also took on the responsibility of refitting the Sunset from Captain Kostor.

After numerous explorations of new materials and structures, he eventually completed all the refitting work for the Sunset: "I have studied the Court's fast sailing ships before. The mortise and tenon structures are very complex. Many of the weight-bearing and pivoting mortise and tenon techniques elude me. However, the rubber latex from the manor can replace those mortise and tenon structures."

The Duchy of Sapphire lacked iron.

All ships were wooden structures that could not be welded, so mortise and tenon joints were used. These joints were not something you could understand just by looking at them a few times. Even if he dismantled a court sailing ship and placed it before Bak, he would still not grasp it.

However, one of the most important special products of Black Horse Island played a significant role in shipbuilding technology—rubber latex.

The materials bonded with rubber latex were stronger than steel rivet welding, and the solidified rubber latex was fire-resistant, water-resistant, sturdy, magic-resistant, and anticorrosive.

"As for the main keel, mortise and tenon joints still need to be used for fixing, but for the details, rubber latex can replace them. Therefore, the condition of the Sunset is not inferior to the Court's fast sailing ships... However, it might take time to develop the technology for three-masted sailing ships,"

Bak was about thirty-five years old, having started work at the dockyards at fifteen.

He might not have much talent, but with years of experience, his judgments were spot on—the Sunset had reached the standard for long voyages.

"Then let's set sail!"

After the Sunset was stocked with naval supplies, Liszt led a Knight Squad, together with officials including Goltai, Blair, and Kostor, aboard the ship.

The spacious deck.

It felt even more expansive than the fast sailing ship of the Long Taro Family he had previously taken. The sea breeze brushed against his face, and immediately under the command of the first mate and second mate, the crew raised the anchor, hoisted the sails, and rowed, the Sunset cleaving through the waves as it slowly sailed out of the dockyard, transitioning from green waters to blue.

The ship sailed very steadily, and with cups set on the deck tables, Liszt could sit under the parasol indulging in the juice of Fragrant Coconut Fruits.

At the top of the main mast, a black Tulip flag fluttered proudly in the wind.

"My Lord, the Sunset is truly magnificent; such a sailing ship is definitely no inferior to the Grand Duke's court fast sailing ships," said Goltai blissfully as he held a Fragrant Coconut Fruit.

"Indeed it's mighty, but I always feel like it's missing something," Liszt walked to the bow and said.

Goltai looked toward the ship's bow and suddenly realized, "I know now, my lord, the repairs on the Sunset are impeccable, yet it lacks a figurehead. To garner the favor of knightly glory on the high seas, a Sapphire Dragon figurehead should be installed at the bow."

The Sapphire Dragon is the dominion of the Sea of Azure Waves, and its figurehead is naturally popular.

"A figurehead?"

Liszt narrowed his eyes, for he was not keen on installing a Sapphire Dragon figurehead—if anything, a Fire Dragon figurehead seemed more appropriate. However, compared to a figurehead, he had a preference for another tool to be mounted on the bow—a ram.

Currently.

The Duchy of Sapphire was the only navy on the Sea of Azure Waves. Installing a ram on a sailboat seemed pointless, as there were no naval battles—those small sampans or rowboats produced by the land kingdoms dared not venture out to sea, as they would nearly capsize and kill people with the sweep of a wave.

"However..." Liszt still decided that after returning, he would have the shipbuilders study rams, "If I can coexist peacefully with the Sapphire Family, rams are naturally useless. But should the Sapphire Duke not tolerate me and naval battles become inevitable, rams might provide a strategic advantage."

He called over Kostor and Bak Fumu and described the concept of armor to them, "After you return, you must carefully investigate the ram."

"Yes, my lord!"

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The broad Sunset, undoubtedly slower than the Court's fast sailing ships, matched only the speed of a regular two-masted sailing ship. Departing from the port town and arriving at Coral City Port, it was sunset. The setting sun hung in the sky, perfectly reflecting against the Black Tulip banner when viewed from the port.

Levis, who had come to greet Liszt, looked at such a scene with little emotion—he did not know the significance of the Sunset.

It was a memorial to the lost civilization of the Child of the Sun—the civilization of the Child of the Sun had completely fallen since the sinking of this sky ship.

"Liszt, is this the three-masted ship transformed from the sunken ship you salvaged from the seabed?" Levis asked upon seeing Liszt disembark from the Sunset, "It doesn't seem to be a Court three-masted ship; its shape and style are quite different from Court sailing ships."

"It might be a hundred-year-old wreck of the Magic Goat Family, basically only a hull remained, the rest was patched up with rubber water," replied Liszt.

"But it looks quite good, not like a wreck."

"It was thoroughly polished and many rotten materials replaced to have this new look," Liszt said with a slight smile, "It might not match up to the Court's fast sailing ships, but it should be more imposing than the Tulip. At least it looks an entire circle larger."

Levis pursed his lips, "The Tulip is over a decade old and should have been replaced... If it weren't for the struggle with Lady Marie and her son, I would have long since paid out of my pocket to buy a more comfortable three-masted ship." He had made no small fortune collaborating with Liszt on various industries.

Thus, he spoke with a bold tone.

A three-masted ship costing several thousand or even tens of thousands of Gold Coins, he talked about purchasing one as if it were nothing.

As for the fight over the family fortune, Liszt, who had already been entrusted with distant lands, had not the slightest interest. He watched the dock workers unload the cargo from the Sunset, quite pleased, "With the Sunset, we can transport at least a thousand more serfs per voyage... Once you have money, you should buy ships, and only with ships can you do big business!"

"The family indeed plans to continue purchasing a batch of cargo ships, mainly because the glass produced from your lands is becoming increasingly popular. Liszt, Loria has calculated that, with the current rate of sales growth, just the glass business alone is enough to support the original Tulip Family!"

The most profitable industry of the territory used to be spirits, but now glass had far surpassed it—this was an exclusive business with little to no cost.

"Let Loria think bigger, the Duchy of Sapphire is ultimately just a remote archipelagic nation, with few people and nobles. The vast continent is the real place to do business. When I fully understand the glass-making technology and expand the production scale, Gold Coins will be nothing but numbers."

"Haha, precisely, one day Gold Coins will be mere numbers to us!" Imagining the splendid blueprint, Levis was exceptionally excited, "Father is still absent from Blue Dragon Island, grandmother doesn't like Lady Marie, Li Vera has returned to Falcon Town, and Loria is unwell... Should we just go to Shattered Stone Castle?"

"For what?"

Levis revealed a wicked smile, "An interesting party."

Liszt shook his head calmly, "Brother, how many times have I told you? I don't like those kinds of parties. I'll rest at Tulip Castle for the night and set sail back in the morning."

"Oh my, you really don't act like a noble. What kind of noble doesn't enjoy life!"

Chapter 594 Tulip Bug Fat Pupa Stage

Levis had his own social circle, with nobles from Shattered Stone Castle and Beer Castle, who would likely become his followers in the future. Liszt did not want to get involved, especially since he really did not enjoy the debauchery of certain parties. He preferred to enter the dance floor to the sound of piano music, dancing elegantly.

After finding someone he saw eye to eye with, he would then take their hand and discuss the ideals of life.

Not just to eat, drink, and indulge in senseless revelry void of emotion and driven only by desire, which could hardly be considered classy.

First, he visited the small castle next to Coral City to chat with his grandmother—mainly to check if Lady Penelope's potted plants showed any signs of birthing Elf Bugs—but there were no such indications. In fact, he had not revealed to Lady Penelope about the Elf Bug borne by the Lithops.

He understood one thing: the Smoke Mission was the only reason for the miraculous nature of Lady Penelope's potted plants, and therefore he did not want her to become further obsessed with them.

The elderly lady should spend more time watching plays, hosting tea parties, and enjoying the twilight years of her life, tending to her potted plants only in her spare time.

After resting for the night at Tulip Castle, he departed early the next morning.

The voyaging went smoothly, and he arrived at Black Horse Port before nightfall, completing Sunset's maiden deep-sea voyage.

After a thorough inspection of Sunset by the apprentice shipbuilders, one of them, Bak Fumu, said, "Lord Landlord, Sunset's structure is now up to standard, but there are a few areas that can be improved upon. With another week of reinforcement and modifications, it should be able to finalize its design."

"Very good."

Liszt expressed his satisfaction and then selected a captain; Kostor, with his wealth of experience, was the obvious choice. The crew was also comprised of some of the earliest sailors from Fresh Flower Town, having battled the winds and waves many times at sea and knew how to navigate through harsh weather.

Yet, Sunset was unlikely to encounter such severe weather.

To complement his flagship, Liszt entrusted the largest of his cherished black pearls, the one as large as a bathtub, to Chris, Elkerson, and two other magicians to create the most powerful Calming Wind Pearl.

In addition, a Water Calming Pearl created from a Pink Pearl was also designated for Sunset.

The Temperature Calming Pearl, crafted from a Golden Pearl, was similarly installed in Liszt's private cabin—Sunset had a broad and robust hull, allowing for a relatively large turret structure, a wooden two-story building. This turret building served as Liszt's private cabin.

When aboard, the turret building would be staffed with male and female servants, ensuring that he could enjoy the full service of attendants while sailing.

The only pity was that the Temperature Calming Pearl could not cool temperatures below freezing.

Otherwise, it could have been used as a refrigerator, storing a variety of delicious food without having to place everything within the Gemstone Space. The Gemstone Space was not very large, about the size of a single apartment at five meters in diameter, approximately 65 cubic meters. He owned four Space Gems, totaling only about 260 cubic meters.

Based on the standard ceiling height of 2.6 meters in Earth's apartments, that would be nothing more than the size of a 100 square meter apartment.

Magical Beast Meat took up most of the space, leaving scant room to carry an assortment of gourmet foods.

Of course.

That was his greed showing, as even Sapphire Duke, who ruled over a country, likely did not possess a Space Ring. When he traveled by sea, he too would have to simplify everything. Liszt's ownership of four Space Gems, selling just one, would easily secure him an earldom—kings and dukes would not be stingy for such a ring.

However, as the Space Gems were tied to the secret of the Formless Dragon, Liszt was reluctant to reveal this.

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In the subsequent days, Sunset remained docked at Black Horse Port for painting, refurbishment, and interior decoration.

Liszt returned to Fresh Flower Town and resumed his mundane daily life.

The only thing that was not mundane was the birth of two Tulip Bugs, one entirely golden and the other a vivid red, both lustrous and translucent like jade, exquisitely beautiful. After forming contracts with them, the number of Elf Bugs he owned reached 47—including five contracted by Ach.

"Our financial base is getting thicker and thicker, now it's up to you, little guy! Keep it up!" Looking at the Tulip Bug that had already begun to turn grayish-white and whose body was rapidly swelling.

Liszt was filled with anticipation.

This Tulip Bug, under increasing pressure, finally launched an assault on its destiny, entering the decisive fat pupa stage.

"Wah!"

Jela ran over.

Liszt suddenly reached out and grabbed Jela, who was about to approach the fat pupa stage Tulip Bug, and glared, "Jela, listen up, from now on, you are strictly prohibited from getting close to this box, not to mention any touching of the Elf Bug! Did you hear me?"

Jela, twisting her body, cried out in "wahs."

But after being scolded in Liszt's mind, she quickly calmed down, pouting her lips and nodding reluctantly, agreeing to his terms.

"Go on, go and play." Feeling a bit sorry for her, yet he still toughened his heart and showed indifference.

It was to stimulate Jela, to make her work harder and aim higher.

Jela flew back into her box, sullen, while Mickey in another box not far away kept herself entertained by counting corn kernels.

Liszt was greatly encouraging to the Tulip Bug in its fat pupa stage.

Only then did he leave the castle and came under the apple tree, where he lay in the rocking chair to relax his body. Seeing Butler Carter approaching, he suddenly asked, "Mr. Carter, do you think we should transplant this apple orchard to Thorn Castle? I will definitely spend most of my time at Thorn Castle in the future, and without an apple orchard, it always seems like something's missing."

Butler Carter placed a cup of green tea on the apple table, smiling as he said, "My lord, you can now start planting apple trees in Thorn Castle. By next year when the main body of the castle is completed, the apple trees should also begin to sprout, and in a few years, you will have a new apple orchard."

"It's a pity there isn't a second Apple Bug; an apple orchard without Apple Tree Cordyceps is not perfect."

"Perhaps we could purchase Apple Bugs from other islands," Butler Carter suggested, something he definitely wouldn't have considered before, but as the revenues of the territory grew higher, his ambitions also grew stronger—buying an Elf Bug was no big deal.

Liszt nodded at once, "Mhm, have the merchant fleet pay extra attention, if there are Apple Bugs for sale, buy them immediately!" He decided to build an apple orchard in Thorn Castle as well.

In case an apple falls and hits his head one day.

An epiphany might strike, and he could discover the "universal gravitation" of this world.

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While the days passed leisurely,

Earl William Lee finally returned from Blue Dragon Island, and on the day of his return, he gathered his followers and went to Tulip Castle for a meeting. He laid out the content of this year's Pioneer Mandate: "The Grand Duke has already contacted the Steel Ridge Kingdom, and the Pioneer Mandate war will start in August. We will depart on July 20th to assemble in Bull Hoof City."

The Pioneer Mandate wars have been going on for over a hundred years.

Whether it's moved forward, postponed, or even canceled, none of it was new.

Therefore, no one raised objections, and the meeting moved on to the next item—what scale of force to deploy, and the allocation of Knight Order personnel.

Liszt sat relaxed in his chair, showing little interest in the discussion.

He used to think that a knight's charge required cunning, and had even specially recalled 'The Art of War by Sun Tzu', but now with his strength soaring, he gradually lost interest in using any tactics—just do it!

Chapter 595 Dispersing Husk

The final conference concluded that Coral Island would devote its full strength to the Pioneer Mandate, a campaign scale even larger than the battle of Iron Hoof Island and the extermination of the Marquis of Bull.

Since many Earth Knights were recruited during last year's Pioneer Mandate, this time nearly eleven hundred Earth Knights could be sent into battle.

Among them, Liszt led sixty Earth Knights on the campaign, also taking on the role of Captain of the Black Knights. However, his main task remained sword fighting, directly handing over command of the Knights to Marcus. Until Emily could rise to assume the position, Marcus was always his Chief Knight.

The well-trained Blizzard Beast Squad would soon make their full appearance—it was time for the nobles of the Eagle Kingdom to experience the terror of a big dog wreaking havoc at home.

The conference ended.

The nobles returned to their own lands to prepare their Knight Orders.

They were set to depart on July 20th, and there was not much time left until departure. Fortunately, Liszt had prepared in advance, so he was not very busy and continued his routine life. He made two trips to the Dodo Island Volcano, severely exploiting Little Fire Dragon Leo, enhancing his own strength even further.

Then, he entrusted Leo to Ach, delivering food every few days, lest the Little Fire Dragon starve to death upon his return from the war of the Pioneer Mandate.

"Don't worry, brother, Ach will take good care of Leo."

"You should also take extra care of Pike and the others," continued Liszt.

"Mhm," Ach suddenly remembered something, "Are you taking Ros with you, brother? Ros could protect the fleet in the sea."

"Ros? No, let her stay with you," Liszt said.

Liszt had no intention of bringing Rainbow Whale Rose along; apart from the twenty-some days of the round trip, he wouldn't be at sea the rest of the time, and since battles would occur on land, Rose would be of little help.

"By the way, Ach, have you started writing your book yet?"

"Ach is currently organizing the categorization of the books to be written. There are so many ideas; there will be a lot of Magic Books to author. By the time brother returns from the war, Ach should be able to complete a part of it."

"Then, when I return, I will be looking forward to enjoying your work."

...

In the blink of an eye,

The day of departure was fast approaching.

All the affairs of the domain had been meticulously delegated: with Goltai overseeing the officials as a whole, if not ambitious, at least he could ensure that everything proceeded as usual. Paris, in her role, was securing the safety of the territory, while Ach also guarded in secret.

Paris, transformed into a Black Dragon Wraith, was a force not to be underestimated, and Ach, as a Water System Grand Mage, was very powerful in water-based combat.

If pirates did assail Black Horse Island, Ach alone could likely resolve the situation. Standing in the midst of the sea, with high-level Magicians casting spells in succession without Sky Knights to block them, there was no stopping Ach. And the Rats he had covertly sent would be exposed under Paris's search.

For Paris, who could become invisible, investigating a person could not be simpler.

Adding to that the Grand Magicians of the Mage Tower, led by Chris Truth, the safety of the domain required no concern from Liszt.

The only thing that troubled him was the Tulip Bug, which, under pressure, had advanced into its Fat Pupa Stage, and despite Liszt's daily encouragement, its Magic Power continued to wane day by day. By the time of departure, the magic of the fat, wilted Tulip Bug was becoming barely perceptible.

"This is dangerous, could it be about to fail?"

Liszt felt uneasy within; he could no longer sense the emotions of the Tulip Bug, and its will to live was almost gone. No matter how he tried to reach out, he could not elicit any response from the Tulip Bug.

"Why is this happening?"

"Even though the Smoke Mission stirred the threads of destiny, the Tulip Bugs still continued to wither?" His expression grew increasingly grave as the Fat Pupa Stage Tulip Bugs inside the castle were clearly continuing to perish.

In the fields of Tulip flowers at the Fresh Flower Farm, the Tulip Cordyceps too began to curl and yellow, its leaves gradually withering and the flower atop its head listless. Even as Liszt tried tirelessly to replenish it with fertilizer, sprinkle Jade Powder, and even grind up numerous Magic Potions infused with Chaotic Magic Power to supplement the Cordyceps with magic energy.

It still could not reverse its decline.

In the end, under Liszt's helpless gaze, the evening before he set out. The magic power of the Fat Pupa Stage Tulip Bug completely dissipated, and with a gentle touch, its plump body immediately turned to ash, vanishing into the air. The Tulip Cordyceps in the tulip fields also dispersed with the wind.

Since his transmigration, it was the first time one of his own elves had died.

Evolution failure seemed to erase them completely, leaving no trace of Tulip Bugs other than his memory.

"Master."

Standing behind Liszt, Carter called out softly, wanting to offer some comfort—For those who were not bound by a contract, the life and death of Elf Bugs did not have much impact. They had never experienced that wonderful feeling of a heartfelt connection and naturally did not have deep feelings.

For many people, the failure of an elf's evolution was a very normal phenomenon.

The chance for an Elf Bug to evolve into a Little Minor Elf was only a few percent. Most Elf Bugs failed to pass this stage of evolution. For instances like Jela and Mickey in the castle to succeed continuously in their evolutions, it was attributed to the favor of a knight's glory and was otherwise inexplicable. Even many small Nobles would suppress the evolution of their Elf Bugs.

They would rather the Elf Bug live out its ten-year lifespan to the point of old age, rather than having it die early due to evolution.

"I'm all right, Mr. Carter, just feeling a bit down," Liszt said, looking at the empty box and taking a deep breath to rally himself. "It's just one Elf Bug. I saw many Tulip Bugs fail to evolve back when I was a child at Tulip Castle... There will be more and more cases like this in the future."

"Indeed, all beings experience birth, aging, illness, and death, and elves are no different."

"I am leaving tomorrow. I leave the castle in your hands."

"Please rest assured, Master."

"There is nothing to worry about. At the seaside villa on the other side, have someone clean it occasionally according to my previous arrangements, and don't let just anyone get close."

Butler Carter nodded, "As you wish, Master."

Liszt turned his head and smiled, "I know what you're thinking, Mr. Carter. I have many secrets, and I trust you'll keep them for me, won't you?"

His behavior often differed from that of ordinary people. As a trusted butler, how could Carter not notice?

The white-haired Carter chuckled playfully, "From the Sapphire Duke to a serf in the fields, everyone has secrets. The Master's secrets are Carter's secrets, hidden in the cellar of the castle. There is only one key to open it, and one day, it will accompany Carter to be buried in the ground."

"You will live a long and healthy life."

Liszt smiled knowingly, "Don't work too hard, take good care of yourself. My castle cannot do without you. Leave those trivial tasks to the servants."

...

Talking with Butler Carter lightened the heaviness in his heart.

After returning to his study, Liszt sat in his chair, lost in thought for a moment, before he called up the Smoke Mission—this was the first time the mission had failed, and hence he wondered how the Smoke Mission would change.

With intense concentration.

The ethereal, shifting smoke slowly rose and quickly twisted into Serpent Script.

"Mission failed, Tulip Spirit Bug died."

Chapter 596 Bloody Mary

The task had failed.

The Smoke Mission, which had always gone smoothly, met with failure for the first time. From the moment Liszt had discovered the Smoke Mission, he had pondered what changes would occur if a mission failed.

But fearing an unpredictable outcome, he had always strived to complete the task or change it. Moreover, the tasks' rewards were so rich that he couldn't bear to let them fail. Even this time, as the Tulip Bug evolved, Liszt still did not wish for failure.

Yet failure came, and he stared at the Smoke Serpent Script that was beginning to transform, unblinking.

Waiting for the latest change.

Slowly.

The twisted smoke began to form new Serpent Script: "Task: When good fortune is spent, misfortune will take its place. It is impossible to stay completely dry when walking by the

river's edge, but you must learn to grow in adversity, like a storm petrel bracing the tempest. Please defeat the Bats in the Dark Night. Reward: Bloody Mary."

"Hmm?"

"Still a task?"

"Good fortune is spent, misfortune takes its place?" Liszt felt astonished; he had considered that the Smoke Mission might drift away from him, or cause backlash and serious injury, but he didn't expect it would just shift from "good fortune" to "misfortune" and then instruct him to conquer the bats in the dark night.

The task, once completed, still offered a reward, essentially unchanged.

He felt somewhat disillusioned but also inexplicably relieved—the form of the Smoke Mission pleased him, and he did not want it to change.

Immediately.

His attention focused on the task at hand: "What are these Bats in the Dark Night, and what is Bloody Mary? I seem to have heard of Bloody Mary, a kind of cocktail? I remember it appears in a number of movies, this cocktail called Bloody Mary. Are they sending me a new cocktail recipe?"

Bloody Mary was already understood to be a cocktail.

As for the Bats in the Dark Night, Liszt still could not quite understand whether it referred to a kind of magical beast that was a bat or a vampire?

In knight novels, there are stories involving vampires, a special kind of human that can turn into bats. Specters, liches, and nixies have all proven to exist, so he believed in the absolute existence of vampires—in Curtis Truth's notes, "vampires" were mentioned alongside magicians.

It seemed that, like druids, vampires were a sort of special caster.

"So, could it be that a vampire carries the Bloody Mary cocktail recipe with them and they want me to take them down to get the recipe?" Liszt wasn't nervous; he was no longer the ignorant Wu Xia A Meng. As a Half-Step Dragon Knight, unless a Dragon Knight came to kill him, he feared no challenges.

"When will the Bats in the Dark Night come?"

He waited until the late night but did not encounter the Bats in the Dark Night. The Eye of Magic patrolled the surroundings, and he even roamed around riding the Landwalker bird Loki, still finding no traces of the suspicious Dark Night Bats.

His sleep that night was not sound.

However, by the time he led the Knight Order to depart for Tulip Castle at dawn the next day, he still hadn't encountered the Bats in the Dark Night. He no longer waited, perhaps the Bats in the Dark Night would attack him on the road—as for attacking his domain, Liszt could only hope that Paris, Chris, and Ach could stop them.

He had already instructed Butler Carter that if the domain encountered any danger, to immediately escort the elves to the seaside Castle and to keep blowing the horn he had specifically placed there. By then, Ach, hearing the horn's sound, would protect the elves. He believed that elves hiding in the water could survive safely.

Protecting the elves was equivalent to protecting the majority of his domain.

...

Coral City Port, the fleet set sail.

Liszt did not accompany the Earl aboard the Tulip Family's largest three-masted sailboat, the Tulip; instead, he stayed on his own ship, Sunset, enjoying the comfort of the constant temperature air conditioning. Until they reached Bull Hoof City, there was still no activity from the Smoke Mission, and the Bats in the Dark Night had not revealed their whereabouts.

"I've talked with Ach; if vampires or the like attack the territory, she will quickly come to inform me after ensuring the safety of the elves... With Ach's speed and strength, there should be nothing in the great sea that poses a danger. She should have come to tell me by now... It should be fine."

It is a four-day journey from Black Horse Island to Bull Hoof City, and with Ach's speed, she could arrive in half a day.

Even traveling from Black Horse Island to the mainland would not take a full day.

So, Liszt was not concerned about his territory since Ach had not appeared.

The port of Iron Hoof City was bustling with activity, with almost all the nobles of the Grand Duchy participating in the Pioneer Mandate. The fleets of the Nobles were packed tightly, jamming the entire port full. The Earl was going to attend a meeting, and because Liszt did not have many acquaintances among the Nobles, he simply wandered around the vicinity of Bull Hoof City.

And soon after, he heard that in the trade market of Bull Hoof City, there was an elf bug trade—it was a rare occasion when domestic nobles gathered, and naturally, he did not want to waste the opportunity.

Liszt, who was feeling bored, would not miss it either.

He put on a mask and attached a characteristic dried Tulip blossom to his chest to ward off the stink of Bull Hoof City, leading his servants into the market.

"Viscount Liszt, it is indeed you." As Liszt was strolling through the market, someone greeted him. When he turned his head, he saw it was Jobs Glaux, the son of the Earl of Moonlight City, Jonas Glaux.

"Sir Jobs, are you also browsing the market?"

"Yes, I am looking to see if there is any trade for elf bugs." Jobs was very keen on socializing and immediately introduced several young people with him to Liszt, all of whom were scions of the Blue Blood Alliance.

Unlike the Feudal Nobles, the scions of the Blue Blood Alliance would generally go into battle as adults. Although the mortality rate was high, they ascended in ranks much faster than Feudal Nobles. Essentially, their resources were either bestowed by the Grand Duke or plundered from the battlefield.

The proceeds from the management of their fiefs were a very small percentage.

Inherently, the Blue Blood Alliance and the Feudal Nobles did not share a social circle, and young nobles seldom interacted with each other; but as the youngest Sky Knight in the country, Liszt was very impressive. The young Nobles following Jobs greeted him courteously.

Liszt returned the greeting politely without appearing arrogant or overly enthusiastic.

After the greetings were exchanged,

they chatted briefly and then dispersed, without more interaction. Liszt continued to search for elf bugs in the market, but the worthwhile ones were too few. When he finally saw a Barley Bug that had not been contracted, the seller insisted on a price of four thousand five hundred Gold Coins and refused to budge.

Paying four thousand five hundred Gold Coins for a Barley Bug was foolish; even elf bugs that could cultivate Magic Potions might not be worth that price.

Liszt did not insist.

He did not have Magic Potions related to barley, and buying it would be a significant loss. Moreover, the death of the Tulip Bug had made him aware that not all his elf bugs were guaranteed to evolve successfully just because he had acquired the Smoke Mission—he even decided to abandon his stimulation plan for Jela.

The evolution from a Little Minor Elf to a Greater Elf also had a high chance of failure—although it would not result in death like the Tulip Bug, a severe vitality loss and reduced lifespan were certain.

So, he hoped to let nature take its course.

He no longer thought about interfering with the elves' evolution, only providing pheromones or the like as much as possible to help them increase their chances of evolving successfully.

...

That night, he followed the Earl to attend a banquet hosted by the First Prince.

At the banquet, once again, as the youngest Sky Knight in the country, he was heavily praised by everyone. Despite his best efforts to avoid it, he ended up drunk, and with the help of his servants, he returned to Sunset and fell into a deep sleep.

Chapter 597 Catching Bats Barehanded

Iron Hoof City Harbor.

In the middle of the night, it was still noisy and bustling; knights bored during the voyage were still making a ruckus at the harbor, either gambling, competing in drinking, or disembarking to find amusement in the city.

Liszt, however, was fast asleep in the small tower building.

As was his custom no matter how drunk, he would always take a bath before returning to his room to sleep. But today, for some reason, he had been overcome by drunkenness and went straight to bed.

Outside the cabin, servants stood watch.

There was also a team of knights patrolling back and forth, constantly on guard against the outside world—of course, many more knights were in the lower cabins drinking and playing games, just careful not to be loud and disturb Liszt's sleep.

A sailor got up in the night and fumbled his way to the toilet.

Facing a urinal that emptied directly into the sea, he relieved himself with a splash. One could imagine that the next day, Iron Hoof City Harbor would be filthy beyond measure. Almost all the ships had toilets that discharged directly into the sea, which might sound disgusting, but the sea had the power to purify.

After all, the fish and shrimp also defecated, and their waste went directly into the sea too.

It was because of this pollution that Liszt had specifically anchored the Sunset on the outskirts of the harbor, to avoid being suffocated by the stench accumulating inside.

The sailor finished up, feeling much lighter, and shivered abruptly.

He pulled up his trousers and headed back.

Suddenly, he felt a bird flying past and got a big scare, "Damn it, what kind of bird isn't sleeping at night!" He cursed, then returned to the cabin to continue sleeping.

However, what he didn't see was.

It wasn't a bird but a bat, pitch-black all over with only its eyes a blood-red color. The bat circled the Sunset once, finally determined its direction, and quietly landed above the window of the small tower building. Hanging upside down, its head just peeked over a little bit of glass, allowing it to see inside the room.

This was a bat that wasn't particularly remarkable, only the size of a palm, but its blood-red eyes were exceptionally alert.

And it was nimbly surveying the interior of the home.

Inside, one could see three servants, one man and two women; the two maids seemed to be reporting something to the manservant. Then the manservant nodded, indicating for them to continue their work. He himself took an iron out of the cupboard, fixed it with charcoal, waited for the iron to heat up, and then started pressing clothes.

After watching for a while, the bat dropped down, then flapped its wings to move to another window.

After several changes, it finally chose a room, squeezing through the gap under the door and onto the floor. The room was very dark with no lights on, but it was chilly, much cooler than outside. This made the bat's gaze momentarily dull with confusion, as if it didn't understand why the room was so cool.

But it didn't pay too much attention to this and flew up towards the bed.

Circling the bed twice, it seemed to be making sure the person sleeping on it was indeed asleep. Seeing that the sleeping person was reeking of alcohol and breathing evenly, it flew away from the bed, satisfied. The next moment, the bat at the edge of the bed suddenly emanated a crimson light.

As the light flickered, it transformed into a plump, short statured woman wearing tight black leather clothes. Her pale complexion and pitch-black hair were just visible in the dark room; her blood-red eyes were particularly clear, as if shining.

From a bat into a woman, she stood at the bedside, pulling out a small tool resembling a syringe from her swollen chest area.

Then, bending over, she seemed about to collect a bit of blood from the person asleep on the bed using the syringe.

But just as she was about to proceed.

The person who had been fast asleep suddenly stretched out a hand, grabbing the female bat's neck directly. Then, a light bloomed, though no one knew when a crystal lamp had been placed at the head of the bed. The lamp's light swiftly illuminated the room and also the owner of the arm clutching the female bat's neck.

It was indeed Liszt who had drunkenly stumbled back and immediately fallen asleep.

His eyes, swirling like starry vortexes, were full of indifference and mocking expression. His handsome face bore a faint sneer as he said, "Bats in the dark night, I thought you were some terrifying entity, but it turns out you're just a sneaky vampire. Speak, what is your identity!"

From his tone, it was clear he fully understood the nature of the female bat's assault.

And indeed he did.

In his heart, he had been aware of the Dark Night Bats for several days, so he never let his guard down. No warnings had come from his territory, and it was unlikely to encounter a bat during a voyage. Thinking it over, Bull Hoof City was clearly the best place to encounter the Dark Night Bats. That's why he had feigned drunkenness, trying to attract the Dark Night Bats.

Alcohol intoxication can be easily dispelled by circulating Dragon Dou Qi, so he couldn't actually get drunk at all.

He had only planned to give it a try and didn't hold much hope. Unexpectedly, while using his Eye of Magic in the dark room, he spotted a blood-red, glistening bat circling the tower's small building.

Therefore.

There was the act of pretending to sleep.

Lying on the bed, his body was tense, ready for confrontation. When the bat flew over the bed, he had intended to capture it; however, he didn't act rashly but waited a moment longer. Then he witnessed a miraculous scene: a bat actually transformed into a living woman.

As suspected, a legendary vampire, able to switch between human and bat form at will.

Under the light of the lamp, the female vampire's appearance became clear: wavy black hair, blood-red pupils, a pale but beautiful face. Her seductive red lips parted slightly from Liszt's choking grip, revealing white teeth yet without the fangs that vampires were supposed to have.

Beneath the tight leather outfit, her body was curvy, with full breasts and plump buttocks, looking quite sexy.

"Why won't you answer my question?" Liszt wasn't intimidated by the vampire, gripping her throat without any mercy.

But the female vampire suddenly stuck out her tongue, licked her lips, and forced a smile.

Then her body burst with a bang, and a blood-red light flickered. She had transformed into dozens, maybe even hundreds of small bats, frantically fleeing in all directions.

The room instantly filled with bats, their chaotic flight obstructing his view, with some even launching attacks at Liszt.

"Trying to escape?"

Liszt's body burst with Dou Qi, shooting forward like an arrow, seizing a bat attempting to squeeze through the door gap.

Of all the bats, this one shone the brightest.

After catching it, he turned and punched with a surge of Dou Qi that turned into flame, roasting the bats filling the room popping and crashing into blood-red light. In the blink of an eye, the room full of bats was left with only a few still aimlessly flying, but none daring to approach Liszt again.

The bat in his hand screeched shrilly, struggling to escape his grip.

Although Liszt wasn't gripping tightly, he released a dense High-level Fire Attribute Dragon Dou Qi, easily overpowering the blood-red magic power emitted by the bat.

"Stop struggling, you think you can escape from my grasp?" As the foremost person below a Dragon Knight, Liszt felt his power was unfathomably deep.

A sneaky vampire, how could it possibly escape from his hands.

In any Knight's novel, aside from their elusive behavior, vampires didn't seem to possess much strength. After a few confrontations, he had already gauged the vampire woman's

strength. Physically weak, it was evident she wasn't a Knight-like being, but rather a caster similar to a magician.

A caster, when confronted up close by a Knight, let alone a Half-Step Dragon Knight, the outcome is predictable.

Chapter 598 Black Knight Family

Although the disturbance in the room was brief, it still alarmed the guard's retainers outside, who quickly came to inquire.

"My lord!"

"Nothing of concern. Continue back to your post," Liszt didn't intend to alert others, preferring to ascertain the vampire's identity before making further plans.

After the retainer withdrew.

He looked at the bat, which had stopped struggling, and gently released his hand.

The bat, upon hitting the ground, suddenly burst into a blood-red glow and transformed back into a woman wearing tight leather clothing. She didn't run again, and although her pale face appeared calm, disbelief and panic were evident in her eyes. However, she quickly regains a normal expression and masks her emotions with a smile.

"Indeed, the youthful Sky Knight of the highest strength in the Duchy of Sapphire," she said, her Serpent Script clumsy and riddled with grammatical and sequencing errors, revealing she was obviously not from the Duchy of Sapphire... vampire.

"My strength is indeed formidable, but let's talk about you, what is your identity?" Liszt smiled faintly, maintaining the demeanor of a gentleman despite the assassination attempt, "I've always believed in the existence of vampires, but this is the first time I've seen one with my own eyes."

"I'm just passing by. Would the Viscount believe that?"

"Of course not, every move you made from before you entered the door until after you were inside fell within my view. So why not be straightforward, reveal your identity and intention in detail, and then I'll decide whether to kill you or let you go."

"But really, I was passing by, smelled delicious blood, came here to find the Viscount..."

Before she could finish.

Liszt reached forward and grasped the female vampire's neck again, his expression calm but the strength in his hand increasing: "I am usually a very patient person, but I'm feeling uncomfortable for not having bathed tonight, so my patience is wearing thin. If you don't talk, my lost patience will lead me to simply crush you to death."

"Ah... ah... ah..." The female vampire tried to speak but couldn't because her neck was being squeezed.

Liszt seemed to have no intention of letting go, continuing, "I'm actually very interested in your background, but sometimes I can't control myself and have a penchant for killing indiscriminately. If you want to run, feel free, if you escape this room, you win."

Only after completing his speech did he release his grip.

"Cough, cough..." The female vampire coughed violently for a moment, her ample chest trembling continuously, certainly captivating, "Viscount, you're so heartless, women don't take kindly to the heartless."

Liszt said indifferently, "Continue spewing nonsense, testing my patience."

The female vampire, feeling helpless, underwent an internal struggle, her expression torn and hesitant, and she didn't speak again. Liszt didn't rush her, just watched her, but his thoughts shifted elsewhere—he summoned the Smoke Mission to see if there was any prompt from it.

Strangely though.

The Smoke Mission hadn't changed at all, indicating the mission was still incomplete.

"Hmm? Have I not defeated the Bats in the Dark Night?" Liszt looked at the female vampire behind the smoke, furrowing his brow slightly. He was slightly confused about the meaning of the Smoke Mission—did he need to kill this female vampire to consider the mission complete?

Such a frown, and the murderous intent showing in her eyes.

The struggling female vampire made her decision in an instant, "Viscount, my name is Elizabeth Black Knight, from the Black Knight family of vampires, from the Eagle Kingdom..."

"You can speak Wind Language, I understand it."

"Um, my name is Elizabeth Black Knight, I am a mixed-blood vampire of the Black Knight family, and as for the Black Knight family, we serve Prince Alonso Xenkelai as vampire retainers." Elizabeth Black Knight began speaking in Wind Language and no longer stuttered, clearly expressing her thoughts.

"Alonso Xenkelai?" Liszt had heard the name. It was written on the title page of the Marquis of Bull's book about dragons: "To the respected Prince Alonso Xenkelai".

So he asked, "Who is Alonso?"

"He's a Marquis of the Eagle Kingdom, with Xiankelai as his surname, but he's also one of the Eagle Kingdom's Dragon Knights. My knowledge of him is limited, I haven't even met him, haha, I'm just a mixed-blood vampire, and within the Black Knight family, my status is very low."

"Talk about the Black Knight family, and about vampires, as well as your intentions for being here."

"Certainly, I can tell the Viscount, but I have one condition."

"Sorry, I don't like to negotiate terms with prisoners."

"Wait, Viscount, hear me out... I am a mixed-blood vampire, my heart is controlled by a pureblood vampire. The heart is a vampire's greatest vulnerability; without my heart, it makes no difference whether I am alive or dead... If you help me retrieve my heart, I will submit to you completely!"

While speaking, Elizabeth gently stuck out her tongue and licked around her red lips, "Then you can do whatever you wish, and I will obey your commands."

The female vampire under the light was full of temptation.

Although Liszt's soul was no longer that of a young man in the prime of life, his body still was, and he unconsciously felt a warm reaction, thankfully he immediately circulated his Dragon Dou Qi, pressing down this hint of warmth.

His face gave nothing away, "A vampire that only dares to skulk in the darkness, I have little interest in such allegiance, but I am quite interested in pureblood and mixed-blood vampires. Explain the difference, to me it seems like there might be more than one vampire around here?"

"Pureblood vampires are those whose blood has been highly refined and has completely integrated with Blood Magic, which is a special branch of dark magic that can be passed down from generation to generation within a family, though we have very low fertility. Mixed-blood vampires are those whose blood has not yet integrated with Blood Magic; we are all vampires who have been transformed from humans."

"So, earlier when you had that syringe, were you trying to turn me into a vampire?"

"It was the command of Tuobert Black Knight. He wanted to turn you, Viscount, into a mixed-blood vampire, to exist as his subordinate." Elizabeth continued seductively, "You, Viscount, are very strong. Just kill him, and I will swear allegiance to you, and share all secrets with you!"

"Why should I believe you? In fact, I have sufficient means to make you submit and beg for mercy, to voluntarily tell me your secrets. Now I give you a choice. One, refuse to cooperate, and be killed by me; or two, cooperate willingly, and if you perform well, I might help you kill this Tuobert Black Knight."

He could see that when Elizabeth spoke about Tuobert, a flash of hatred flickered through her eyes.

Of course, he could not dismiss the possibility that she was purposely putting on an act.

After a moment of thought.

Elizabeth decisively chose the second option, "Tuobert is acting on the orders of Prince Alonso to seek out the Grand Magicians of the Goat Assembly. After the dragon-slaying incident, several Grand Magicians of the Goat Assembly went missing, and only they know what exactly happened to the Sapphire Duke and that Sapphire Dragon."

Chapter 599 Elizabeth's Blood

...

The dragon slaying incident had passed a year and a half ago, during which the Duchy of Sapphire issued a Pioneer Mandate and was preparing to launch a second one; everything seemed unaffected.

However, unforeseen by many, Liszt once again became entangled in the aftermath of the dragon slaying incident.

A Dragon Knight on active duty from the Eagle Kingdom, Marquis Alonso Xiankelai, sent his vampire servant to Iron Hoof Island to search for the missing Goat Assembly's Grand Magician and to inquire about the true reality behind the original dragon slaying incident—it seemed that during the dragon slaying incident, he was the shadow behind the Marquis of Bull.

Unfortunately.

Elizabeth Black Knight was only a mixed-blood vampire, transformed into a vampire from her human form by the pureblood vampire Tuobert Black Knight. In her own words, during the day she was on the level of a common magician, as sunlight caused severe disruption to her blood magic.

In the dark of night, the power of blood magic significantly increased, and her strength could reach that of a Grand Magician.

And as a bat, she could stealthily infiltrate many places and quietly complete missions.

"Tuobert is a core member of the Black Knight family, his wife is a native pureblood vampire, and he is a foreign pureblood vampire who transformed from human and gradually attained pureblood status. In the night, his strength is approximately that of a Completion Level Sky Knight," Elizabeth explained in detail.

Vampires could be described as a caster profession, but also as a completely new species.

Most vampires are mixed-blood, humans transformed through rituals to replenish the vampire numbers.

The core vampire circle is very small, primarily family-based, consisting entirely of purebloods. And it's mostly native purebloods born from vampire unions, with only a few being foreign purebloods who have transformed from humans and ascended. Pureblood vampires have low birth rates but formidable strength.

"I am not familiar with the core members of the Black Knight family, I simply obey Tuobert, who holds my heart in his grip... This time Tuobert came to Iron Hoof Island, bringing five mixed-bloods, and I am one of them. If you kill Tuobert and take his heart, you can command the five of us mixed-bloods."

After hearing many secrets.

Liszt's face remained expressionless as he asked indifferently, "If Tuobert is a Completion Level Sky Knight, why do you think I can kill him? You must know, I have only just been promoted to a common Sky Knight."

That was the truth.

Although he had become a Dragon Knight and his Dou Qi was gradually changing into Dragon Dou Qi, it still belonged to the category of common Advanced Fire Attribute Dou Qi, not to the level of Completion—The proper ranks of a Sky Knight should be just common and elite, like the Earth Knights, but an additional category of Sword Saint Level was created due to the significant disparity.

The title of Sword Saint, christened by the sword, felt more like an honorary distinction.

Without Completion, an Advanced Dou Qi is considered a common level Sky Knight; once Advanced Dou Qi reaches Completion, it signifies a Completion Level Sky Knight. There isn't a separate Advanced Dou Qi classification for Sword Saint Level; Sword Saint is a title earned through power, a transitional phase between common and Completion.

So with his Advanced Dou Qi not at Completion, Liszt naturally could claim he was a common Sky Knight.

Elizabeth licked her lips.

Whether intentionally or not, she always managed to incorporate a hint of seduction, "If I had not experienced it firsthand, I would not believe that Viscount's prowess could be so formidable. But in the hands of Viscount, I couldn't even cast blood magic, I could feel the Dou Qi in your body terrifyingly subdues blood magic."

Her blood-red eyes were incredibly bright, "I once fought with a Sword Saint, and granted I could not beat him, but he couldn't catch me either, not even Tuobert could easily grasp me... But Viscount, you captured me effortlessly, your strength is far greater than what I heard, I'm willing to take a bet!"

...

Speaking of which.

She then showed a trembling expression, "The Black Knight Family is terrifying. I was once just an ordinary Magic Apprentice, and it was Tuobert who discovered my blood was suitable for Blood Magic, forcibly turning me into a Vampire... I hate Vampires, I hate the Black Knight Family, and even more so, I hate Tuobert!"

Her expression was vivid as if she bore deep-seated fear and hatred.

However, Liszt was certain that Elizabeth was indeed acting, her expressions were slightly overdone. Therefore, her words could only be listened to for the moment and not taken seriously.

Nevertheless.

Defeating Tuobert Black Knight was probably a necessary mission. After all, he had already captured Elizabeth, and the Smoke Mission was still incomplete, meaning that "Bats in the Dark Night" were not just Elizabeth, but also included Tuobert and four other Mixed-bloods.

According to the information provided by Elizabeth, Tuobert's strength was probably equivalent to a Completion Level Sky Knight, which was nothing in Liszt's eyes.

Even if including the other four Mixed-bloods, as well as Elizabeth himself, he wouldn't have any trouble dealing with them.

Only, Vampires are, after all, elusive. Elizabeth might just be bait sent by the enemy to lure Liszt into a trap. He was not yet an invincible Dragon Knight, at most a Half-Step Dragon Knight, whose Dragon was not only unmounted but also not mature. Even his strength was not as good as the Marquis of Bull initially.

He still needed to be careful and cautious.

"Elizabeth, how can I trust you?"

"Viscount, what do I need to do for you to trust me? I'm even willing to agree to do anything for you."

"Try to act less in front of me. You may not believe me, but I often instruct the theater troupe's actors on how to perform in my territory... Tuobert can control you with your heart, and since I can't do that, how can I trust that you aren't deceiving me? Or that you won't turn against me when the time comes to kill Tuobert?"

Elizabeth's eyes lit up, "Has Viscount already decided to kill Tuobert?"

Liszt smiled faintly, as if discussing a trivial matter, "If you can convince me, I don't mind killing a few Bats."

Taking a deep breath, her full chest expanded even further.

Elizabeth extended her right hand, and with a slight swipe of her fingernail across the wrist of her left hand, a cut immediately appeared, blood began to ooze out. Of course, she was not committing suicide; rather, she was extracting her own blood through Blood Magic, pulling out a fist-sized lump of sticky, glowing blood.

Her already pale complexion became even paler, almost to the point where the blue veins beneath her skin were visible.

She held out this lump of blood to Liszt, "Viscount, this is the blood I have infused with Blood Magic over the years. Although leaving it won't kill me, I will lose almost all my magic and the potential to advance to a Pureblood... I hope this can make you trust me."

In the vision of the Eye of Magic, this lump of blood was wrapped in a rich red Magic Power, while the Magic Radiance on Elizabeth herself was dim, nearly extinguished.

After hesitating for a few seconds, he reached out and took the lump of blood.

Squinting his eyes, he said, "Tell me, where is Tuobert, how do I find him, what are his weaknesses... I believe you must have a plan."

Chapter 600 How a Vampire Dresses

"Tuobert is very cautious; he never casually reveals his whereabouts, but tonight, my task is to extract your blood. As long as I contact him, he will definitely appear,"

"Aside from fearing the light, pureblood vampires have almost no other weaknesses. His bat form is a high-order state, unlike me, where only one bat is the real body; every single one of his bats is his real body. If you, Viscount, cannot eliminate these bats swiftly, he will be able to escape."

"However, I am indeed prepared. If I kill him and absorb his heart and blood, I can ascend to being a pureblood... This is a Bloodlight Web, a piece of magic equipment woven for me by a Grand Magician. It can trap a bat in its form. As long as Viscount's hands are fast enough, Tuobert will definitely not be able to escape,"

Elizabeth said.

She fumbled at the front of her leather coat for a moment, then pulled out a folded red fine net and handed it to Liszt.

Speaking of hand speed, Liszt's was certainly not slow, but he was curious, "You keep things hidden on you? Why can't I tell?"

Elizabeth slowly caressed the front of her chest and smiled lightly, "Please, Viscount, do not doubt my generosity."

The corners of his mouth twitched, and Liszt ignored the vampire woman's flirtation, "When you turn into a bat, where do your clothes and these things go?"

"The strength of Blood Magic is such that it can use Blood Magic Power to transform specially made items, although only a small number of items can be accommodated. This Bloodlight Web took me a long time to forge with Blood Magic before it became a personal item that I carry with me," she explained.

"Interesting. What other items do you have?"

"I'm just a mixed-blood vampire; I don't have that many personal items. I only have one Bloodlight Web, secretly forged to deal with other vampires, and the Blood Extractor Needle was given to me for use by Tuobert," Elizabeth said with a plaintive tone.

Liszt did not press further and simply said, "If that's the case, you go out first; I will change my clothes and then join you in killing Tuobert... The sooner we go, the sooner we return; I also need to take a bath after, feeling uncomfortable all over."

He ushered Elizabeth out the door.

Firstly, he did indeed need to change clothes, and secondly, he wanted to see if she would attempt to flee. Trust was out of the question. Until it was certain that blood could constrain her, what was really at play was a test of acting skills.

Elizabeth turned into a bat, hanging outside the door.

The Eye of Magic could see her dim Magic Radiance, and Elizabeth did not flee until Liszt had changed into his Mithril Armor.

He looked at the thick blood on the table and, struck by an idea, quietly stored it within the Gemstone Space—the Gemstone Space cannot contain living things, as it would extinguish the soul, but it poses no problem in preserving physical matter. This ball of blood clearly had no soul, so there should be no issue with storing it.

As for what to do if there was a problem... he hadn't thought that through; it was just a spontaneous idea.

But the result was good; Elizabeth had no issues. When she saw him come out, she let out a light shriek to indicate it was time for Liszt to depart with her.

Liszt did not react but instead had a Retainer Knight bring him paper and pen to quickly write a letter, "Hand this to Captain Marcus, have him deliver it to my father."

After sending off the Retainer Knight and fetching the Landwalker Bird Loki, he signaled to Elizabeth that they could depart.

Elizabeth paused, confused about Liszt's letter writing, but did not question it and instead flew into the night on flapping wings. Liszt mounted Loki and followed the bat into the twilight. After flying for about half an hour, the bat landed.

Transforming back into the female vampire, she took a breath, "Without the blood imbued with Blood Magic, my magic power is nearly depleted; I hope that you, Viscount, can protect me during the battle to come."

"No problem," he replied.

"By the way, was that letter for your father, the Sea Wave Sword Saint?"

Liszt looked at Elizabeth and calmly said, "Just tell my father that if I get ambushed and if I'm not back by the second half of the night, he should immediately inform the First Prince about the vampires lurking on Iron Hoof Island. I believe the First Prince will have a keen interest in your kind."

Elizabeth opened her mouth to speak and sighed, "Viscount, you really are cautious."

"Behind you are Dragon Knights linked to dragon-slaying incidents, one can never be too careful. Alright, enough talk, hurry up and lure out Tuobert. I need to kill him and then go take a bath."

...

This was another forest.

The moon hung high in the sky, its hazy moonlight making the woods seem sinister, with shadows merging into the darkness and the rustling of the leaves in the wind adding an extra layer of terror.

Liszt, hidden to the side, had the Eye of Magic constantly active, keenly observing his surroundings.

He did not trust Elizabeth. After she chose the rendezvous point, he forcibly changed it to another forest. Since the meeting was to be held in secrecy anyway, he had to choose a location where an ambush would be impossible so he could rest at ease.

At that moment,

Elizabeth cast some unknown Blood Magic.

Then she just stood there, quietly waiting.

Twenty minutes later,

Liszt saw a streak of red light appear on the horizon, and as it became clearer, he realized it was a string of blood-red bats. The bats quickly flew in front of Elizabeth, circled around, and then merged into a tall man wearing a cloak with a black front and red lining.

"Mary, you called me in such a hurry, is the mission accomplished?" The male vampire, clearly Tuobert the Black Knight, spoke with a very hoarse voice.

"I'm sorry, Lord Tuobert, the mission failed, and I was severely injured by Liszt. I barely managed to escape," replied Elizabeth weakly.

This was the routine they had agreed upon: to use the failure of the mission to create surprise and shift Tuobert's attention, giving Liszt an opportunity to launch a surprise attack.

However, at this moment, Liszt did not emerge, because he heard Tuobert address Elizabeth as Mary—unsure whether Elizabeth or Mary was her real name. It seemed that this female vampire had been deceiving him all along, or perhaps Mary was the Bloody Mary mentioned as a reward in the Smoke Mission.

The next instant,

Tuobert had already slapped Elizabeth across the face, sending her sprawling to the ground: "Useless thing, you can't even handle such a trivial matter!"

"Ah!" Elizabeth screamed.

This was clearly a signal to Liszt to take action, and while he hesitated for a moment, he ultimately decided to kill Tuobert first.

It didn't matter what conspiracies or tricks there were; in the face of his own unfathomable strength as a Half-Step Dragon Knight, they were nothing but laughable jokes—No one knew how strong he really was; any plot against him would be designed for the ordinary Liszt, not Dragon Knight Liszt.

Boom!

Bursting forth from the bushes, Liszt rushed toward Tuobert. His Sky-Cleaving Greatsword, laden with an abundance of Dragon Dou Qi, executed the Scorching Sun Sting.

The Dragon Dou Qi transformed into flames, piercing through the unsuspecting Tuobert in an instant—under the close-range assault of a Dragon Knight, even the fast reflexes of a vampire were slow.

"Ah!"

The scream shattered the night's stillness.